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STAFF

CONF: EUR/GA INFO: DC/EUR, EUR/LGL, EYESONLY, MDSX, OCC/OSG, ODPD, FILE, DDO (2/P)

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TOT: 021354Z MAY 96 DIRECTOR 758224

S E C R E T
STAFF 021354Z DIRECTOR 758224
TO: VIENNA.

FROM: LIMIT EUR/GA INFO EUR/LGL, OGC/OFLD, DC/EUR, OCC/OSG, OGC/OSD

SLUGS: WNINTEL RYBAT

SUBJECT: EYES ONLY - APRIL 1996 MEETING BETWEEN JFK BOARD ATTORNEY AND JOHN WHITTEN

REF: A. VIENNA 34962 96 3666955
B. DIRECTOR 702048 96 3616677

TEXT:

1. ACTION REQUIRED: NONE, FYIO.

2. THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS THE MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD PREPARED BY IDEN B REF B CONCERNING THE INTERVIEW WITH JOHN WHITTEN AND IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR EDIFICATION.

ON 22 APRIL 1996, FROM APPROXIMATELY 1000 TO 1600, IDENS REF B SPOKE WITH JOHN WHITTEN AT THE U.S. EMBASSY IN VIENNA. IDEN A CONDUCTED THE INTERVIEW BY SHOWING WHITTEN VARIOUS DOCUMENTS AND *HIS PRIOR TESTIMONY BEFORE THE<HSCA.> WHITTEN WAS EAGER TO HELP THE BOARD IN ANY WAY HE COULD AND EVEN OFFERED TO COME TO THE U.S. IF NEED BE. IDEN A CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE USEFUL TO TAKE WHITTEN'S DEPOSITION AT A LATER DATE. ALTHOUGH WHITTEN HAD IN GENERAL A GOOD MEMORY, IDEN A FELT HE DID NOT ADD ANYTHING *OF SIGNIFICANCE TO HIS PRIOR TESTIMONY BEFORE THE<HSCA.> AFTER THE INTERVIEW, WHITTEN TOOK IDENS TO HIS APARTMENT AND THEN LATER TO A RESTAURANT WITH HIS WIFE. IDENS LEFT WHITTEN ABOUT 1900.

WHITTEN WAS EXTREMELY WORRIED AND UPSET ABOUT THE RELEASE OF HIS NAME AND ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE INTERVIEW WAS ON THE VERGE OF TEARS. ALTHOUGH IDEN B WAS EXPECTING HIM TO BE ANGRY WITH CIA AND THE BOARD, INSTEAD, HE CLEARLY FELT HURT AND BETRAYED. HIS OBVIOUS PHYSICAL PROBLEMS ADD TO THIS FEELING OF BEING VULNERABLE. PHYSICALLY HE IS NOT WELL; HE IS PARALYZED ON HIS LEFT SIDE AND HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY WALKING. ON A MAP, HE POINTED OUT HIS APARTMENT AND INDICATED WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE SERIOUS THREATS TO HIS SAFETY SHOULD HIS AFFILIATION WITH CIA BECOME KNOWN. WITHIN A BLOCK OF HIS APARTMENT HE POINTED OUT THE

HEADQUARTERS OF THE KURDISH WORKERS' PARTY (PKK), THE ANARCHIST PARTY, AND A BAR WHERE MANY MIDDLE EASTERNERS WOULD CONGREGATE. HE THEN POINTED OUT THESE PLACES TO IDENS WHEN WE WENT TO HIS APARTMENT. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD DEFEND HIMSELF FROM ANY ATTACK.

WHITTEN ALSO STATED THAT HE HAS BEEN RETIRED FOR ALMOST AS LONG AS HE WORKED FOR THE CIA, AND THAT HE HAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LIFE NOW IN VIENNA. HE AND HIS WIFE HAVE LIVED IN VIENNA APPROXIMATELY 25 YEARS. HE IS A MEMBER OF VARIOUS MUSICAL AND ART SOCIETIES. HE SINGS IN A PROMINENT VIENNA MEN'S CHOIR. HE HAS PUBLISHED VARIOUS ARTICLES ON MUSIC (HIS SPECIALITY IS JOHANN STRAUSS). HE HAS RECEIVED MANY MEDALS FOR HIS WORK IN THE ARTS IN VIENNA WHICH WE SAW WHEN WE WENT TO HIS APARTMENT.

WHITTEN IS ALSO GREATLY WORRIED ABOUT THE FACT THAT HE COMMITTED PERJURY WHEN APPLYING FOR AUSTRIAN RESIDENCY BY STATING HE WORKED FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE BELIEVES THIS COULD SUBJECT HIM TO CRIMINAL PENALTIES IN AUSTRIA. HE STATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, SHOULD HIS AFFILIATION BECOME KNOWN, HE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE AUSTRIA. ON OTHER OCCASIONS, HE STATED THAT HE WOULD TURN HIMSELF IN TO THE VIENNESE AUTHORITIES AND OFFER HIS SERVICES AS A CONSULTANT TO THE POLICE OR INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. HE OBVIOUSLY WAS EXTREMELY DISTRAUGHT AND WAS VOICING WHAT HE BELIEVED WERE HIS OPTIONS SHOULD HIS NAME BE RELEASED BY THE BOARD, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT DECIDED ON A PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHITTEN WAS ADAMANT THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS HE WOULD NEVER BETRAY THE CIA BY TELLING ANYONE ABOUT HIS WORK AS AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER.

BY THE END OF THE EVENING, WHITTEN STATED THAT HE FELT MUCH BETTER ABOUT THE STATE OF EVENTS. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, IDEN B HAD ASSURED HIM THAT CIA WAS DOING EVERYTHING TO PROTECT HIM AND IDEN A STATED HE WOULD ARGUE FOR HIS PROTECTION TO THE BOARD. HE CLEARLY LOOKED UPON IDENS AS HIS ALLIES IN THIS PROCESS AND EVEN STATED THAT HE HAD A "WONDERFUL" DAY TALKING TO IDENS. IDENS LEFT HIM, THEY BELIEVE, FEELING HAPPY AND CONFIDENT ALL WOULD TURN OUT WELL.

AFTER THE MEETING, IDENS SPOKE ABOUT HOW THIS ISSUE WOULD BE HANDLED BY THE BOARD. IDEN A BELIEVED THAT IT WAS MORE THAN LIKELY THAT THE BOARD WOULD AGREE TO PROTECT HIM AND THAT HE WOULD MAKE THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT HE COULD TO THEM. THE BOARD WILL MAKE ITS DECISION IN IT'S NEXT MEETING IN MID-MAY. IDEN B DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR ANYONE FROM CIA TO COME DOWN TO THAT MEETING. WE AGREED THAT SHOULD THE BOARD MAKE THE REPREHENSIBLE DECISION OF RELEASING WHITTEN'S NAME, THAT WE COULD NOT IMAGINE A STRONGER CASE ON WHICH TO BRING AN APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT.

3. IDEN B EXTENDS HER THANKS TO THE STATION FOR ARRANGING THE INTERVIEW AND HER HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS. SHE SAID EVERYTHING WENT EXTREMELY SMOOTHLY. HQS WILL APPRISE STATION OF BOARD'S DECISION REGARDING WHITTEN (PROBABLY MID-MAY). REGARDS.

4. FILE: 785-120-034. INDEX: NONE. CL BY: 0666970, CL

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END OF MESSAGE SECRET